



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology  
Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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### HB 2397 – RELATING TO BROADBAND

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the State's broadband interests, supports the intent of HB 2397.

HB 2397 creates a state broadband infrastructure authority, and provides for clarification of the role of the state broadband office within DBEDT to focus on critical elements of digital equity and literacy necessary to maximize benefits of investment in broadband infrastructure. Creation of a state broadband infrastructure authority, administratively attached to DCCA, could provide a useful vehicle for the ownership and governance of the assets and facilities to be constructed and acquired with the anticipated influx of public funds. It appears that the authority would need to be self-funded, and would rely on future revenue from the collection of managed assets in order to support its staffing and operations. The rules and processes to support the expected Federal formula and competitive funds remain unclear, and are likely to be issued over the second half of calendar 2022.

Planning for the ideal use of the expected Federal funds is underway, and we expect that we will align projects and outcomes with those funds as the programs controlling the funds issue rules and create the mechanisms to expend the funds. Part of the planning effort is to address the governance and sustainability of the efforts to be implemented; we expect to be able to provide specific inputs and recommendations once the rules are clear and plans come together later this year. Financial sustainability of the investments is critical to ensure sufficient support of operations, maintenance and the eventual renewal of critical broadband assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2397.